A CHRISTIAN NEWSLETTER ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Department of International Affairs
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
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ACTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS VOTED BY GENERAL BOARD OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Foreign policy, refugees, relief services, immigration, ecumenical relations, support for the United Nations, and other matters of international relations were among major concerns of the General Board of the National Council of Churches, meeting in Los Angeles, December 4-5. It considered reports and took action on several items related to the current crisis in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

One session was devoted to an over-all consideration of "Current World Crises -- What the Churches Are Doing." Extensive services to people in Hungary, to Hungarian refugees in Austria and in the U.S.A. and to people in the Middle East, as in the Gaza Strip and in Egypt, were reported by Rev. Russell Stevenson, Director of Asia and non-European Areas for Church World Service of the National Council. The meaning of the current crises for the missionary movement, including new problems and difficulties, was presented by Dr. Roland Scott, Executive Director, Joint Office for Southern Asia and the Near East, of the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council. The activities of the churches related to foreign policy and international political developments were reported by Dr. Kenneth L. Maxwell, Associate Executive Director, Department of International Affairs, in an account of work of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the British Council of Churches, the French Protestant Federation, the World Council of Churches, the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, and other ecumenical bodies. He emphasized that for the first time, through the ecumenical movement, it had now become possible for Christians to carry on a continuing significant exchange of views across national lines where principal countries were involved in conflicting views, international tensions and hostilities.

In a message to the President of the United States, the General Board said:

"We, the General Board of the National Council of Churches meeting in Los Angeles on December 4-5, desire to register our appreciation of the telegram sent you by Eugene Carson Blake, President of the National Council of Churches on November 15. We reaffirm its policies. We commend it to you in your continuing weighty responsibilities of leadership for a just and durable peace." (For full text of Nov. 15 telegram, see the Newsletter for November; President Eisenhower's reply, page 3, this issue.) (To page 2)

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On the work of the churches in the current crises, the General Board took this action:

"We desire to record our great appreciation and firm approval of the prompt and effective manner in which the officers of the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs have addressed themselves, in the name of the churches, to the trying events of these critical days.

"We urge them to continue these vigilant efforts to seek peace by strengthening the moral authority of the United Nations and every form of Christian witness among the churches

"We express to the officers of the World Council of Churches and the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs the hope that on appropriate occasions they will comunicat our concern and our support of their leadership to sister churches, especially those in situations of tension and conflict.

"We recommend that at an early moment the Department of International Affairs prepare and circulate among the churches a brief survey of the relationship of the churches to the nurture and support of the United Nations."

In communications to church bodies in Britain and France, the General Board said:

"We have followed your actions in these critical days with a deepening awareness of the community we find in the service of our Lord. We express our appreciation of your steady witness for peace with justice.

"In the ties that bind us together in Jesus Christ, we rejoice in the communications we have had with you in these days through the World Council of Churches, the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, and personal consultations.

"As Christians in the United States we humbly recognize that we and our government share responsibility in and for the crisis in the world of nations. With you, we would reaffirm our confidence in the United Nations as the instrument through which the moral authority and will to peace of the peoples of the world finds appropriate and effective expression.

"We pledge ourselves by the grace of God to renewed efforts to minister to the special human needs created among our fellowmen by recent events.

"May the God of peace bless our every effort to serve Him."

In a communication to the Near East Christian Council, the General Board declared:

"We of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. convey to the NECC our deep concern for the Christian Community and all Near East peoples. With awareness of our American involvement in the tragic events focusing on you we acknowledge the need for sustained Christian witness and service. We gratefully remember your immediate response to the suffering in Egypt and elsewhere and we pray that our one Lord may be lifted up among the peoples of the Near East. We pledge ourselves with you to the continuing Christian task and to renewed efforts to the end that a just and lasting peace may be achieved."

On immigration of refugees, the General Board took action as follows:

"Viewing the tremendous refugee problem growing out of the tragedy in the struggle of the Hungarian people for freedom, the General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. expresses gratification for the administrative action of President Eisenhower in making possible the provisional entry of a considerable number of these refugees to the United States.

"Viewing other present refugee problems and the possibility that still other emergencies may arise in days to come, the General Board makes the following judgment as to the imperative need for legislation for refugees:

"Consonant with the several actions of the General Board regarding the continuing obligation of our member Churches to render all possible service -- spiritual, material, and migration -- to refugees, and to support an improved non-discriminatory Immigration

and Naturalization policy which will enable our country to accept its fair share of persons from all parts of the world who are in need of a new homeland and qualify for admission to the United States, the General Board believes that new legislation is needed. It is convinced that there is urgent need of new and early provision for visas for our fair share of the refugees, escapees and orphans who need migration assistance, and that any provisions which might be proposed to deal with general over-population problems should be kept separate from legislation for refugees.

"We hold that prompt, adequate legislation for refugees would permit the performance of a Christian service; that it would be in the national interest; and that it would be an important contribution to better international relations.

"Further, the General Board authorizes the staff of the National Council of the Churches of Christ, or duly designated representation, to testify at Congressional hearings in support of this position."

On emergency relief appeals by the churches, the General Board voted this resolution:

"Whereas, we, along with our sister churches the world over, view with deep concern the suffering caused by recent events to many thousands of people, and the sudden desperate need for help by people of Hungary and the Near East, both refugees and war evacuees; and

"Whereas, the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches and the Department of Church World Service of the National Council of Churches have promptly gone to work on these new frontiers of need, rendering invaluable assistance; and

"Whereas, the Division of Inter-Church Aid and the Department of Church World Service will need substantial additional funds for emergency relief and inter-church aid; and

"Whereas, we learn with gratification of denominational plans to secure additional emergency resources tc be administered through their programs and in their cooperative service through the World Council of Churches and Church World Service; therefore be it

"Resolved, that this General Board encourage the World Council of Churches, Church World Service, and the member denominations in their appeals which it appears will total approximately two million dollars, and express the hope that this concerted action will receive attention and generous support from both their membership and from other people of good will; and be it further

"Resolved, that this General Board authorize the units of the National Council of Churches to strengthen and coordinate these denominational efforts as may be requested, as circumstances require, and as resources allow."

TEXT OF PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S REPLY TO PRESIDENT BLAKE'S MESSAGE ON CRISES

"Thank you very much for the telegram you sent recently on behalf of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Your comments on the policy of the United States Government in the Hungarian and Near East crises, with particular reference to the handling of these issues in the United Nations, were heartening ones.

"These two grave situations have represented an urgent opportunity for the United Nations to marshal the strength of universal moral forces on behalf of the rule of international law and justice. Action taken in the United Nations has eloquently revealed the deep-seated longing among the nations for the establishment and maintenance of peace, and the universal desire that the independence and integrity of nations be maintained and respected. In the forum of the United Nations we must press our search for solutions of these and other problems which confront the community of nations.

"I am most appreciative of the role of the churches in support of the United Nations and on behalf of those who suffer and are in want as a result of international calamities.

"You may be certain that the United States Government will continue its efforts, within the United Nations and in its relations with other Governments, to further the deep desire of the American people that conditions of true and lasting peace be established in the world."

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT HELD AT ARDEN HOUSE, DECEMBER 14-17

Under the sponsorship of Senator Ralph E. Flanders (Vermont) and Senator John Sparkman (Alabama), the Committee for World Development and World Disarmament and the Post War World Council, and with the support of Congressman Brooks Hays (Arkansas), a three-day conference on disarmament was held at Arden House, Harriman, New York, December 14-17. This was a small working conference of specialists in various related fields and it was chaired by Norman Thomas.

Those present were leaders from government, management, labor, farm and cooperative groups, civic and voluntary organizations, religious groups, and universities, including experts in such fields as atomic sciences, military matters, economics, political science, and international relations. Concerns of the Protestant and Orthodox churches in international relations were represented by Dr. Kenneth L. Maxwell, Associate Executive Director Department of International Affairs, NCC. Extensive advance preparation was a part of the overall program with various proposals in the field of disarmament being studied and evaluated by the conferees.

The conference dealt with such questions as the present international political situation, the nature and meaning of disarmament, scientific facts on modern atomic warfare and possible results, the status of official negotiations on disarmament, minimum essentials for successful disarmament, the relation of disarmament to the total foreign policy of the U.S.A., economics in disarmament, and possible approaches in the United Nations, in our own government, and in public opinion here and abroad. Among other items of discussion were the new U.S. proposals on disarmament recently reported as having been divulged in general terms by high government sources with the indication that these proposals had White House approval for presentation later in the United Nations Subcommittee on Disarmament. The findings of the conference are to be made public in the near future, and if possible, these will be covered in some detail in the Newsletter at that time.

DISARMAMENT HEARINGS HELD BY SENATE COMMITTEE IN ST. LOUIS, DECEMBER 12

In the series of hearings it is holding outside of Washington, the Subcommittee on Disarmament of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee received testimony in St. Louis on December 12 following the pattern established earlier this year in Boston and Minneapolis.

A number of university leaders and experts in fields related to disarmament testified, including Dr. Arthur H. Compton of Washington University, St. Louis. One of the churchmen who spoke was the Rev. William K. Russell of the Protestant Episcopal Church who testified on behalf of the Department of Christian Community Action of the Metropolitan Church Federation of Greater St. Louis, of which Dr. O. Walter Wagner is Executive Director; he also testified on behalf of the local chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

In his testimony, Mr. Russell said that for the U.S. to continue to carry on atomic bomb tests in the face of moral principles does damage to the mental and spiritual well-being of our citizenry and to the moral leadership which the rest of the world has the right to expect of us. He asserted that at the present rate of expenditure for arms, in a fifteen year period beginning in 1951 we shall have spent more than was spent in the preceding fifteen years from 1935 to 1950, including World War II. He declared that the General Assembly of the United Nations is increasingly representing the will of the people of the world, which is a welcome development, and one which the U.S. should encourage and strengthen. He expressed the view that the UN military police force should be strengthened and that it should be made a permanent part of the UN. He testified in behalf of universal disarmament which would be related to a strengthened UN with more adequate authority to control armaments.

IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ON "CHANGING AMERICA" STUDIED AT NCC UNITS' ASSEMBLY

World relations were part of the program of the Joint Assembly of the Division of Christian Life and Work and the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches in Indianapolis, December 10-12, on the theme "The Task of the Churches in Changing America." International issues came into the program at various points.

In one of the major addresses Dr. John A. Mackay speaking on "The Eternal Imperatives in a World of Change" made two points of particular relevance to international affairs: He said that in international relations, "the ultimate Christian imperative is a call to justice and righteousness and not primarily to security....To absolutize security is to enthrone an idol in the place of God and His righteousness." He lamented that recent international relations including U.S. foreign policy have tended to make security the ultimate of human behavior. He also suggested that any nation opposing the will of God for the universal good of all mankind will find the "stars in their courses" fighting against it. He said that, the Soviet Union is finding this out; our Allies are finding it out; and our nation will find it out if we do not transcend nationalism. A second point was that Christian people of the United States must re-establish contact with Christian brethren in China. Granting that this is not the secular mood, he said that U.S.--China history, the fine mutual influences between our countries, and Christian missions in China mean we as Christian churches have a special responsibility. He said that while newspaper men may be kept out and willing to stay out, Christians must persevere in seeking contact. He said it is imperative that U.S. Christians do not wait for an invitation but express the desire to see our Christian brethren in China.

Dr. Elfan Rees in an address, "The Task of the Churches in a Changing World," emphasized that three important tasks face the churches of the world Christian community today. One is the urgent need for conversations between church leaders of all the areas of the globe. The second is the urgent need for the churches to express Christian solidarity. The greatest channel for this expression is the church-to-church material aid. The third is in the realm of service which the churches must render to people who are suffering from the upheavals of the world in our time, such as the refugees in all parts of the world including Egypt as well as Hungary. He suggested that in the tangled tragedy of international affairs it is impossible to have a World Council of Churches which does not witness in the UN and elsewhere to the Christian demand for peace with justice and freedom, for observance of human rights and for the well-being of all people everywhere. This is the work of the CCIA. He said, "The challenge to the new evangelism is the challenge of people who, because of hunger, homelessness and fear are apt to lose what faith they have or question the sincerity of those who preach that God is love."

Another unscheduled highlight of the Assembly was an informal talk by Victor Reuther, Assistant to the President, UAW, AFL-CIO. He had returned from Austria within the week. He underlined the need for Christian concern and for prompt, dramatic and resolute action by our government in seeking to help the people of Hungary by all possible peaceful means.

The main function of the Assembly was to afford opportunity for two days of intensive discussion in smaller groups on important areas of the work of the churches. One of the 15 groups was devoted to the subject, "The Impact of International Affairs on Changing America." Its chairman was Dr. Robert Tobias, a professor at the Graduate School of Religion at Butler University and Associate Executive Secretary of the Council on Christian Unity of the Disciples of Christ. Its secretary was Dr. Clifford Earle, Secretary of the Department of Social Education and Action, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

The report of the discussion group on "The Impact of International Affairs on Changing America" was referred through the Division of Christian Life and Work to the Department of International Affairs for study and appropriate action. Future developments will be reported in subsequent issues of the Newsletter.

HUNGARIAN SITUATION ILLUMINATED BY CHRISTMAS MESSAGE OF DR. BLAKE FROM ALASKA

The President of the National Council of Churches, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, spent two weeks through Christmas day ministering to U.S. military forces, churches, and churchmen in Alaska. Dr. Blake was commissioned by the General Board of the National Council as spiritual embassador, for his preaching tour which included virtually all Alaskan bases. He issued his Christmas message from a snow-bound base in Alaska to Churches of the U.S.A.:

"Ever since the tragedy of the seemingly unsuccessful uprising in Hungary, many Americans have felt a terrible frustration. Here was a gallant people, freedom-loving, who dared to attack the machine guns of their oppressors with stones and their tanks with rifles The result was what would be expected. The machine guns and tanks won the battle. Anger, despair and frustration were the only concrete results of the brave effort.

"I recall these recent events in the hope that now at Christmas we may be helped to see them in a different light. I remind you that Jesus was born in a nation that was subject to foreign rule. In Bethlehem and Jerusalem alien soldiers in a hated foreign uniform patrolled the streets to impose the will of a distant emperor upon a people who longed to be free. Not long before, a man named Judas had led an unsuccessful revolt against the Romans. He was executed and his followers were scattered. Despair lay heavy like a blanket of fog upon the land. The people asked themselves if God was dead. Had He forgotten them forever? Where was any hope?

"On one of the darkest of these nights, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. And, although His birth did not change the immediate political situation in the slightest, His presence in the world even as a helpless baby began a revolution that has no end. Into the darkness there began to shine a light that transforms despair to hope, violence to peace, and hatred and anger to love and joy.

He concluded with the hope for "renewed dedication to the cause of responsible freedom and...renewed confidence in the power of God who made Himself known in Jesus Christ."

STOP-PRESS STORY: FOREIGN AID STUDIES OFFER OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW ACTION

Church members and groups with their continuing interest in foreign aid and technical cooperation may wish to register their views with appropriate government bodies now making studies in these fields to report in January or the near future:

1) A Special Committee of the Senate is making "exhaustive studies of the extent to which foreign assistance by the United States Government serves, can be made to serve, or does not serve, the national interest, to the end that such studies and recommendations based thereon may be available in the Senate in considering foreign aid policies for the future." The committee has been gathering first-hand judgments through questionnaires to selected U.S. organizations and representatives abroad, including some church agencies. Hearings are planned for early 1957. "To the maximum extent feasible the committee will seek the views and suggestions of the American public." The Chairman: Senator Theodore F. Green, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C.

2) The House Committee on Foreign Affairs began its investigation in October on "significant recent developments in the field of foreign affairs which require a reformulation of basic policies or a redesigning of present mutual security programs." Public hearings are expected early in the new Congressional session. The Chairman: Congressman Thomas S. Gordon House Office Building, Washington, D.C.

3) The President's Citizen Advisers on the Mutual Security Program, seven members, are on a global inspection tour. They are to review U.S. Programs and "to recommend as to future government policy in regard to military, economic, technical and other programs in the light of the foreign policy and the national interest of the United States." Issues covered may include military versus economic aid, long-term versus short-term, grants versus loans, bilateral versus UN programs. Deadline date: March 1, 1957. The Chairman: Benjamin F. Fairless, Room 286, Executive Office Building, Washington, D.C.

JAPAN WELCOMED INTO THE UNITED NATIONS: INTERVIEW WITH MEMBERS OF THEIR DELEGATION

As its eightieth member, the General Assembly of the United Nations welcomed Japan into the organization in December. The particular meaning of this event was indicated in statements made by some of the Japanese leaders who came to the United States for the occasion. Mr. Tokutaro Kitamura, former Finance Minister of the Japanese government and member of the Japanese Diet, and Mr. Isamu Akamatsu, a member of the Japanese Diet, in informal conference with church leaders in the United States emphasized both how much and what this world recognition and membership in the United Nations mean to the people of Japan. Mr. Kitamura declared: "This was the high moment of Japanese history." Its meaning he explained in this way: "By this we assumed a moral responsibility in the world community of nations." On the question of Japan's position with regard to blocs of nations he said: "Of course, Japan's sympathies are with the Asian-African, Bandung peoples, but we shall seek to pursue an independent course of responsible action in the United Nations."

Mr. Kitamura who served as a member of the group of Japanese political leaders who came to accept Japan's seat in the United Nations, is a Presbyterian elder in Sasebo and is one of the outstanding Christian business leaders in Japan.

PAMPHLET: "The New Atomic Age" is a readable report from the UN Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy; it includes some background on nuclear reactors, and some untechnical information about the technical, economic and social problems arising from the atomic revolution. Of interest to all concerned with social-technological problems of our changing society, and for those interested in the ramifications of the International Atomic Energy Agency. 25¢ from the Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York; October, 1956.

FILM: "The OAS - A Digest of its Activities" covers all phases of the activities of the 21 nation Organization of American States, both at its headquarters in Washington and at its offices throughout Latin America, showing day-to-day operation, and including sessions of the Ambassador OAS Council, international conferences, cultural activities, and the staff work of the Pan American Union, the secretariat of the organization. In addition, it outlines the 66 year history of the OAS and its development into the modern inter-American system. Free to schools, clubs, churches and other community organizations. 16mm. sound, black and white or color, running time 15 minutes. Apply to the Office of Public Relations Pan American Union, Washington 6, D.C.

NEWS FROM A CONSTITUENT COMMUNION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL: The United Presbyterian Church of North America is conducting, through its Department of Temperance and Social Education and Department of Youth Work, an Essay and Poster Competition on the themes: "Youth Look At:...Race Relations...World Peace...Alcohol." They describe it as an opportunity for United Presbyterian youth to look at some of the social problems of our day in the light of Christian faith and experience and to present constructive thoughts and ideas in a dramatic and forceful way. The age groupings are 12-14; 15-17; and 18-25, with nominal cash awards in each group. It is suggested that much empasis be put on these programs in each local church. The essay subject for this year is in the third category. Further information about this contest may be obtained from Howard Maxwell, Board of Christian Education, United Presbyterian Church, Publication Bldg., 209 Ninth St., Pittsburgh 22, Pa.

REPORT FROM A COUNCIL OF CHURCHES: The St. Joseph County Council of Churches, with headquarters in South Bend, Indiana, in mid-December put on their annual one day Institute on World Peace. Following a key-note address on "Current International Crises and Christian World Responsibility," by Dr. Maxwell of the National Council staff, the group divided into four discussion sections on: Europe, The Middle East, South East Asia, and the United Nations. At dinner the groups reported and held a closing session on "action". Special features included television and radio programs related to the Institute. The Chairman is Mrs. P. D. Pointer; the Executive Secretary, Dr. Grover L. Hartman; they were assisted by Judge Louis M. Hammerschmidt, of South Bend, a member of the Department of International Affairs of the National Council of Churches.

WOODROW WILSON'S WORK CELEBRATED IN CENTENNIAL EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS: BOOK REVIEW

During 1956 there has been widespread and varied observance of the centenary of Woodrow Wilson's birth, celebrating not only chronology and his outstanding life, but giving renewed appreciation of the timeliness of much of his thought. For example, it is suggested that many of his ideas have been embodied in the United Nations. In keeping with the celebration, one of the many writings published this year about Wilson and his work is brought to our readers' attention in the following book review:

The Politics of Woodrow Wilson, Selections from His Speeches and Writings; edited with an introduction by August Heckscher; published by Harper and Brothers, New York; 1956; 389 pages; $5.00. "Politics" is used in the broad sense to include the nature of man and of government.

A searching inquiry into American political life and related subjects by Woodrow Wilson is set forth in selections from Wilson's writings beginning in the late 1880's and ending in 1923. Subject headings follow roughly "the order of Wilson's career from teacher and president of Princeton University, through Governor of New Jersey to President of the United States and world statesman." Mr. Wilson thought about "The Problem of the Constitution" and how it must be reinterpreted in the light of the developing political and social scene; "The Individual and Society"; "The Ideals of Education"; "The Challenge of Action", political and social action by the individual; "The Foundations of Reform"; "The Exercise of Power", especially as by the President of the U.S.; the growth "From Neutrality to Leadership"; "Into War", and "Toward Peace". Selections from his speeches after the first World War and immediately before the Peace Conference, on attaining a just peace, come under the heading of "The Great Hour". The final chapter, with his appeals to Congress and the people of the U.S. to join the League of Nations, and the expressions of his feelings when he realized that this plan was defeated, is titled "The Lost Battle".

The following brief quotation from his writings on the subject of "The Individual and Society" (pp. 74-75) gives a hint of the thought-provoking ideas which are in this book. In discussing the place of compromise in political realities, he wrote: "I understand the biologists to say that all growth is a process of compromise; a compromise of the vital forces within the organism with the physical forces without, which constitute its environment. Yet growth is not dishonest. Neither need compromise in politics be dishonest--if only it be progressive. Is not compromise the law of Society in all things? Do we not in all dealings adjust views, compound differences, placate antagonisms? Uncompromising thought is the luxury of the closeted recluse. Untrammeled reasoning is the indulgence of the philosopher, of the dreamer of sweet dreams. We make always a sharp distinction between the literature of conduct and the literature of the imagination. "Poetic justice" we recognise as being quite out of the common run of experience."

This is a book for all interested in and concerned with the relation of the individual and society to government, in the development of American thought toward world leadership, and in the growth of a political leader toward Christian statesmanship.

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